



EASA Safety Information Bulletin

SIB No.: 2012-04
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Subject: L'Hotellier Ball and Swivel Joints Quick Connectors –
Positive Check of Control Surfaces

Ref. Publication: Air Accident Investigation Unit (AAIU) of Belgium Final Report
 AAIU-2010-27 dated 07 January 2011.

Luftfahrt Bundesamt (LBA - German Civil Aviation Authority)
 Lufttüchtigkeitsanweisung (LTA – airworthiness directive) 1993-
 001/3 and LTA 1994-001/2, both dated 09 April 1998.

Applicability: Sailplanes, powered sailplanes and other aircraft equipped with
 L'Hotellier ball and swivel joint quick connectors.

Description: As a result of the investigation of a fatal accident with a Eiraviion
 PIK 20D sailplane in Belgium, the AAIU has published a report,
 referenced above, which includes a safety recommendation to
 EASA to introduce a requirement for a “positive check” after
 assembly of sailplanes equipped with L'Hotellier couplings, such
 as the ones used on the aircraft involved in the investigated
 accident.

The cause of the accident is reported to be the pilot's failure to
 adequately connect and secure the elevator control during
 assembly and failure to perform an adequate pre-flight check.

Similar accidents involving a disconnected elevator are described
 in the report, in all of which the elevator was not properly
 connected during assembly of the sailplane.

These same connectors have been the subject of two
 airworthiness directives (ADs, referenced above), issued by LBA
 Germany, after it was found that the connectors, even when in
 good condition and correctly connected, may disconnect in flight.
 A mandatory safety requirement was introduced to lock the cams
 with a safety pin.

The referenced ADs were not issued by LBA Germany as
 representing the 'State of Design' for the affected equipment,
 designed and manufactured in France. Consequently, these ADs
 cannot be recognised as adopted by EASA under European

Commission (EC) regulation 1702/2003, Article 2a, paragraph 1(a)(iii) which specifies that “*the applicable airworthiness directives are those of the State of design*”.

Based on the available information, EASA has determined that, at this time, this airworthiness concern is not an unsafe condition as specified in EC 1702/2003, Part 21A.3B, that would warrant AD action.

Recommendations: Owners and operators of the affected aircraft are recommended to perform a positive check of the control surfaces after the assembly of the sailplane. This should involve at least two individuals; one to hold the control surface stationary while the other individual attempts to move the flight controls in both directions.

Incorporating the actions as specified in the LBA Germany ADs into the assembly procedures of the affected aircraft is also an acceptable method.

Contact: For further information contact the Safety Information Section, Executive Directorate, EASA. E-mail: ADs@easa.europa.eu.